
Controlling Sodium and Reading Labels When You Shop

Sodium is a mineral found in table salt and sea salt. It is found in some foods naturally, but especially in the additives, preservatives, and seasonings in some packaged foods. That is why it is important to choose fresh foods when possible. When selecting processed items, read labels to limit the sodium from food and beverages. A low-sodium nutrition plan usually limits dietary sodium to **1,500-2,000 milligrams (mg) per day**. Select more **‘Low Sodium’ foods with 140 mg of sodium or less per serving** and limit **‘High Sodium’ foods with more than 300 mg of sodium per serving**. Discuss with your dietitian so that you’re meeting your specific sodium limit. Below are some tips for the next time you’re grocery shopping:

What foods should be in your shopping cart?

- ✓ Vegetables: fresh or frozen
- ✓ Fruit: fresh, frozen, or canned
- ✓ Whole grain breads and cereals
- ✓ Lean unprocessed meats and legumes
- ✓ Herbs, spices, and seasonings that contain no sodium or salt
- ✓ Unsalted nuts and seeds
- ✓ Low fat dairy foods

Where do you find these foods in the store?

- Plan a grocery list before you go to the store.
- Shop the outside aisles where you find the fresh produce and fresh meats.
- You will find fresh herbs with the fresh produce.
- Look for “no salt added” or “low sodium” foods near the regular items on the shelf.
- Some low sodium items will be found in the “Diet Section” of the grocery store.



What should you look for on the food label?

Reading the label will help you see how much sodium is in the food.

Start with the serving size

Remember, if you eat more than one serving, you will get more sodium than the amount listed.

Next, check sodium content

The **Percent Daily Value (%DV)** is a handy tool which tells you how much of a nutrient is in one serving of food. As a general rule for sodium, 5% DV or less of sodium per serving is low whereas 20% DV or more of sodium per serving is high. Food labels will help you compare two choices so that you choose the lower sodium product.

Lastly, be a smart shopper

Look for “**reduced-sodium**” or “**no-added salt**” on the food label. Items that say “**salt-free**” or “**sodium-free**” contain less than 5 mg of sodium per serving. “**Low-sodium**” products contain less than 140 mg of sodium per serving while “**very low-sodium**” contain less than 35 mg of sodium per serving. If unable to buy low sodium versions, drain and rinse canned foods under running water to remove excess sodium.

Extra Helping Meatloaf/Potato/Carrots:

| Nutrition Facts | | | |
|--|-----------|--------------|---------|
| Serving Size: 1 meal (450g) | | | |
| Servings Per Container: 1 | | | |
| Amount Per Serving | | | |
| Calories 612 Calories from Fat 360 | | | |
| % Daily Value* | | | |
| Total Fat | 40g | | 62% |
| Saturated Fat | 15g | | 77% |
| Cholesterol | 113mg | | 38% |
| Sodium | 1944mg | | 81% |
| Total Carbohydrate | 34g | | 11% |
| Dietary Fiber | 6g | | 25% |
| Sugars | 12g | | |
| Protein | 9g | | |
| Vitamin A | 42% | Vitamin C | 13% |
| Calcium | 8% | Iron | 22% |
| *Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs. | | | |
| | Calories | 2,000 | 2,500 |
| Total Fat | Less than | 65g | 80g |
| Sat Fat | Less than | 20g | 25g |
| Cholesterol | Less than | 300mg | 300mg |
| Sodium | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg |
| Total Carbohydrate | | 300g | 375g |
| Dietary Fiber | | 25g | 30g |
| Calories per gram: | | | |
| Fat | 9 | Carbohydrate | 4 |
| | | Protein | 4 |



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